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ABSTRACT

"Sesame Street" has proved to be a successful attempt to use the best of contemporary television entertainment techniques to produce a daily hour-long educational television directed to the preschool population. The success is the result of the leadership of the Children's Television Workshop (CTW) approach to producing the show. Some of the key features of the CTW approach are: a dedication to a justifiable national need; a highly competent, dedicated management; sufficient funding to do the full job of preparation, research and production together with promotion and community involvement on a professional level; and a recognition that to compete with commercial television it is necessary to adopt that medium's standards and techniques. Other factors are: a salary policy that combines a competitive salary on the lower end of the scale with the psychic rewards of working in a free creative environment devoted to an important social end, a sensitivity to the needs and concerns of creative people, and the inclusion of promotion and research as fundamental elements of the CTW operation from the beginning. (JY)

THE CHILDREN'S TELEVISION WORKSHOP
how and ~~why~~ it works

NASSAU BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES
Research and Development Division
Nassau Regional Office for Educational Planning

ED 066029

Joan Ganz Cooney, with puppet friends Ernie and Bert.

THE CHILDREN'S TELEVISION WORKSHOP
how and why it works

Consultant: HERMAN W. LAND

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
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"The Children's Television Workshop" is the producer of

"SESAME STREET"

"THE ELECTRIC COMPANY"

SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW
OF THE FINAL REPORT

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PREFACE

From the outset the Children's Television Workshop has been sprinkled with stardust. By some quirk of fortune, the germ of the idea first infected a young man dedicated professionally and personally to the advancement of children's education and who fortuitously occupied a position in society that proved the ideal vantage point from which to launch the effort—the vice-presidency of a major foundation with a deep commitment to educational research and development. He had also observed his 3-year-old daughter watching TV test patterns as though hypnotized! At that very moment there became available an unusually competent young woman with solid television experience and an admirable combination of intelligence, judgment, social concern and administrative instinct—Mrs. Joan Ganz Cooney. The enterprise itself was born of a conversation at dinner in the home of Mrs. Cooney, a conversation stimulated additionally by the imaginative input of one of the most vigorous creative practitioners in public television, the drama producer, Lewis Freedman.

It was a time of growing concern among educators and sociologists over the educational deprivation of America's 12 million preschoolers and widespread dissatisfaction with the television fare that had been fed to these millions of young eyes and ears for two decades.

The original concept was almost universally applauded from the beginning by those who had given serious thought to the use of television as a national educational resource.

To many of those in the Workshop who lived through the experience and who now find themselves part of a television and educational success whose degree none truly anticipated, the factors that came so auspiciously together represent a unique historical circumstance that is fundamentally not repeatable.

Others argue that the organizational principles, at least, can be applied elsewhere, regardless of the scale of the enterprise. The author tends to lean toward the latter view. Patterns of organization, carefully thought out in the earliest period of development of the concept, have proved valid in practice—a set of relationships between departments and a concept of leadership together with a well developed, now-proven technique for harnessing research to creative ends. This last represents one of the great practical accomplishments of the Workshop experiment. It is difficult to envision any major television-education undertaking from this point on which will not incorporate as an essential element the concept of the integration of production and research into one self-correcting creative effort.

It would be a mistake, however, to think that the features of the Workshop model can be directly and simply imitated or mechanically applied. Whatever may be true in other fields, identical replication is a naive concept in a field where talent and the intangibles of the creative life are finally the determining factors. Therefore, the experience of the Workshop is best examined in the hope that some useful principles of organization and approach can be derived which will be helpful in assisting others who are attempting to achieve in a similar vein. But these principles should serve only to help direct thinking and suggest basic patterns of operation.

If the reader detects some element of bias in favor of the Children's Television Workshop, let him be forewarned that this is no accident. As executive, editor and consultant, the author has had the opportunity to see many organizations at work in broadcasting, and has been part of some. It is difficult for him to recall its equal, let alone its superior. A thread of sanity runs through the organization. In a field which not infrequently suffers from rampant egomania, the CTW stands out for its professionalism and objective management. It is a management dedicated to the achievement of a social goal through rational ends. It works.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Herman W. Land is a communications consultant. Among the organizations he has served are: The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the National Association of Educational Broadcasters, National Educational Television (NET), the ABC Television Network, Group W-Westinghouse Broadcasting Company, RKO-General Broadcasting Company, Taft Broadcasting Company. He directed the management group which brought educational station WLIW, Channel 21, to Long Island, New York. Before establishing his own consulting firm, he was an executive with Westinghouse Broadcasting Company and Corinthian Broadcasting Corporation and vice-president and editor of *Television Magazine*. He is vice-chairman of the editorial board of *Television Quarterly*, publication of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. Author of numerous magazine articles dealing with the electronic media, he has also written the parent guidebook, *What You Can Do about Drugs and Your Child*, Hart Publishing Company, New York, 1969.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

An author's gratitude and appreciation to:

All those in and outside the Children's Television Workshop who patiently submitted to lengthy and revealing conversational explorations;

The CTW's management and staff, beginning with Mrs. Joan Ganz Cooney, for their accessibility and candor; with a special nod to corporate secretary and presidential assistant, Mr. Robert Davidson, and his able associate, Mrs. Lynne de Vries, for their generalship in steering the project through the maze of a dynamic and busy organization;

The National Center for Educational Technology of the United States Office of Education, sponsors of the study, particularly the project officer, Dr. Lawrence L. Atherton, and his colleague, Miss Jeanne Davis, for their support and encouragement;

The Nassau Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), New York, whose Research and Development Division-Nassau Regional Office for Educational Planning provides services to the 56 school districts of Nassau County; particularly the energetic Mr. Jack Tanzman, its Director, who demonstrated that an effective catalytic person can expedite coordination between two governmental agencies and enable a job of this magnitude to get done in less than eight months' time; and Mrs. Arlene Soifer, in charge of information dissemination for the Division, who brought her considerable editorial skills and those of her staff to bear on the challenge of converting a raw report into a readable and presentable printed document;

The quietly competent and efficient Mrs. Janet Robbins of BOCES Research and Development, who was such a pleasure to know and work with in her role of author's assistant—gathering data, setting up meetings, conducting interviews, and proving helpful in countless ways.

Many experienced and wise observers contributed richly to the author's understanding of the historic experience reported on here. He takes full responsibility, however, for the interpretations and conclusions presented.

SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW

When news of the formation of the Children's Television Workshop reached the television industry in 1967, it was immediately apparent to many in the medium's professional ranks that something of major national significance was taking place:

> A "vacuum" was about to be filled about which there was growing concern—here, finally, was to be a large-scale effort to provide educational assistance to a neglected preschool population through television.
>
> Because the program was to be a "first" there would be no competition—an ideal condition for success.
>
> It was to be adequately funded; finally, an educational television project would be given enough financial support for adequate preparation and testing.
>
> It was to be led by a professional, competent, highly dedicated top management.

The originating management team—made up of a vice-president of the Carnegie Corporation, Lloyd Morrisett, and Mrs. Joan Ganz Cooney, WNDT (now WNET) New York public affairs producer who had done the feasibility study on which the project was based—were setting out on a milestone venture: *To prove that, given adequate resources, talent and preparation time, a daily hour-long educational program directed to the preschool population could successfully compete in the open television marketplace against all that the commercial medium had to offer. It would achieve its educational goals by embracing the best of contemporary television entertainment techniques.*

The reversal of values is fundamental. The CTW should not be viewed as an educational project with entertainment trappings. It is more accurately described as a commercial-style, "big-time" television undertaking seeking to accomplish educational ends.

A "LAUGH-IN" FOR CHILDREN

Joan Cooney had an inspiration one day. From it grew a television program and a way of looking at television as an educational medium that has general significance. During her feasibility study, she talked to several mothers and learned from them that their 3-year-olds loved to watch commercials. They knew the content, could repeat the copy and musical refrains. Why not use "commercials" to educate, she wondered?

More than a technical device was involved. She had come upon a fundamental aspect of media usage that had been overlooked in the main by those interested in television education: *the child of the television age is highly literate where that medium is concerned.* Scholars have so focused on questions of psychological impact, they have failed to notice the child's sophistication as a viewer who takes in stride the most advanced television techniques. In 1968, the NBC program "Laugh-In" began and quickly became a national favorite. It was a radical departure from conventional entertainment, eschewing continuity for a rapid, unconnected series of visual moments charged with humor and satire. Joan Cooney was impressed with the ability of preschoolers to stay with that program and enjoy it thoroughly, even if much of the language and satire was presumably over their heads.

The lesson was clear—*keep abreast of the times in terms of television format and treatment.* So far as she was concerned, the program would be a "Laugh-In" for children.

Joan Cooney describes the background of that decision:

> One of the feelings I had was that little children were watching adult programs, and that therefore their tastes

were for strong music and loud lines, much more than educators and parents admitted or, in many cases, noticed. I had an intuition, and I still have—though we have no proof of this yet—that ghetto children watch more television than any other children. . . . Now there is more than enough empirical evidence that the set is always on in those homes. . . . I realized the preschoolers were watching it all day long, that they were watching all of those commercials. Therefore, they were used to this quick pace. We went into business in 1968. "Laugh-In" had started in the fall. It profoundly affected my thinking.

She was thus able to bring to the enterprise an already thought-out basic approach to discipline and direct the three-way collaboration of educators, researchers and creative staff:

> I said it was going to be a "Laugh-In" for children. It was going to use all the techniques of animation, studio live action, film, and was going to have commercials teaching letters and numbers. . . . We were going to have a cast of at least four, but we were not going to have a star of the show and have to live with that. The format would be the star of the show.

Research later corroborated this strong intuition. It showed the youngsters perfectly capable of staying with and enjoying a fast-moving program with discontinuous sequences of varying lengths, interspersed with the teaching commercials, and minus the traditional host with his careful, obvious lead-ins. The children enjoyed—and learned.

Even the Workshop staff tends to forget sometimes how far the public has come in a media sense. David Connell recounts a startling summertime experience connected with "The Electric Company." The program has a pure electronic format, with no host and no connectives between scenes. It employs elaborate electronic tricks and devices to make its points. These often involve long hours and laborious effort. Connell and his family were in Maine during the summer and watched a press conference tape as it was broadcast by the local station:

> There was one technical effect that we got that really is outstanding, and is a staggering, beautiful electronic effect. My family was sitting with me. I said: "Watch this next piece coming up—it'll kill you." It went by, and they said, "What? What was it?" And I said: "My God, didn't you see what happened?" My 16-year-old said: "That means a lot to you, but it doesn't mean anything to us." He was absolutely right. . . . and we spent hours getting this thing!

Several similar incidents prompted a reexamination of some of the effects the producers were planning, for perhaps simpler—and less costly—ways might be just as appropriate and useful in some instances than the more complicated.

The Workshop experience suggests the future pattern:

1. A continuing monitoring of television programming to maintain awareness of the newest program formats, techniques and styles.
2. An operating assumption that the mass audience is familiar with the newest in popular programming and that it therefore enjoys a high electronic media literacy.

Note that the medium is *television*, not film, an important distinction. Here television subsumes film. Often, there is a tendency to look to a filmmaker as the production source. The CTW concept, however, looks upon film as simply one of several ingredients in the program mix. What rules is a *television point*

of view. In any particular instance film may or may not be the program answer. What is important, then, is a thorough knowledge, not of film as such, but of television programming practice. From a practical point of view, this suggests looking into the television program ranks rather than the motion picture for overall programming expertise.

THE CHILD'S ACCEPTANCE OF EDUCATION AS PLAY

One important element of Joan Cooney's original insight may not be easy to transfer to other situations—the tendency of the young child not to distinguish between education and fun. The adult, she points out, carries with him the feeling that if it is educational, it can't be fun, and that if it's fun, it can't be educational:

> I will tell you the most important thing about our audience: Children don't differentiate between commercial and educational television. They like what makes them feel good, and what makes them feel good is really accomplishment. A child just loves the feeling of accomplishment. That is his pleasure. So if you combine his entertainment with a sense of accomplishment, you succeed. . . . There is a tendency in this country to look upon anything associated with school as a grind and a bore. It is not pleasurable, but play is. So when you begin something about literacy with adults, it can't be fun, and the illiterate adult is not going to watch it, because he's watching "Laugh-In" too, or cartoons, or whatever.

It remains to be seen how far the show-business approach to television education can go as one advances beyond the preschooler level. Whether even a star-studded, sparkling entertainment series frankly designed as education can ever lead the rating charts, may be an open question. The history of the CTW suggests that, at the very least, it should be able to gather to itself an important, large audience. And who can say, if the talent is able enough and the production attractive enough, what is really possible—without actually trying, as Joan Cooney and her fellow pioneers have done?

THE TV MARKETPLACE AS JUDGE

There were no illusions attending the birth of "Sesame Street." It was to be judged as harshly by the marketplace as any other program, educational motives notwithstanding. It would stand or fall on its ability to attract and hold a sufficient percentage of its target audience to justify its generous support, as well as on its educational effectiveness.

There was no certainty that it would work. The program would be dropped if it proved either unable to win a sizable audience or failed to meet its educational objectives. This ambitious aim determined the basic direction of its organization and operational future. It meant that *the program would have to be conceived and produced according to the standards prevailing in the national commercial television medium.*

The implications:

> To find the creative and production talent capable of meeting national commercial competitive standards, it is necessary to dip into the existing pool of what is essentially commercial talent; it means competing for talent with commercial institutions.
>
> The interrelated American television and film industries are so constituted that major talents cutting across the arts and crafts of the two media tend in the main to flow into, and concentrate in, two centers: New York and Hollywood.
>
> Similarly, the production facilities and technical skills called for by complex

> program requirements are still only available on a continuing reliable basis in the same two centers; and even in New York there are not always adequate technical facilities available.

This is not to argue that production of national quality is not possible outside of Hollywood and New York, or that the two-city talent and facilities concentration is desirable. Rather, that since from a practical operating point of view, the task of conducting a highly complex production on the "Sesame Street" level appears formidable, to say the least, it appears to make sense to take the operational realities of a given period into account and plan accordingly.

All of this is well understood by the CTW. Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Lloyd Morrisett, for example, maintains that production for national purposes demands concentration of resources in the talent and facilities centers, as opposed to projects designed to develop local talent. The determining element is the objective, he maintains. Throughout this report we shall be examining the Workshop in that light. Given an objective less demanding than national competition with commercial television, it may well be possible and practical to locate production elsewhere than in the large centers. So long as the objective is to perform on the "Sesame Street" level, however, this does not appear to be a practical alternative.

These conclusions are supported by the experience of the Ford Foundation, long the mainstay of public television stations and the foundation world's heaviest contributor to the medium. Its seasoned television executive, David Davis, says:

> You cannot get the skills, the crafts, the below-the-line types, or the creative above-the-line types anywhere else but in those two cities. You can get bits and pieces of things other places. You can get all that marvelous animal footage shot by the guy at the San Diego station because that resource is there and they have a good cameraman there. You can get a few things from a few of the cities, but the major thrust of it—no, not at this moment in time. That's one of the reasons we're trying to encourage the process of building up San Francisco, Boston and a few other places. Hopefully, 10 years from now they will have been at it long enough so that they'll have built enough people. At the present time an individual station may be in a position to do, say one program a year for the PBS because there is sufficient talent for that project. If they try to do more than that, they'll kill the station. They'll kill what they're trying to do locally. It will just get distorted. . . . You've got to begin to build up some diversity in the system—and we're trying to. But to put a big project like this anyplace would be suicide. It would waste the money and would destroy the operation in which you put it.

Davis notes that this does not rule out competitive production on the local level, so long as one directs his attention to commercial techniques that have proven successful on this scale, such as the "personality" program.

The point is: each objective creates its own production requirements. At the other end of the spectrum, for example, is the closed-circuit presentation of specialized instructional material to a gathering of individuals with a strong common interest in the subject, such as physicians being shown new surgical techniques. While it is important to maintain the interest of this audience throughout the presentation, there is little need for building in the strong entertainment values of the television program that has to attract an audience in competition with other programs.

The need to achieve marketplace success is what drives the Children's Television Workshop, disciplines its operation, and accounts for its organizational style.

MANAGING A CREATIVE ENTERPRISE

The Joan Cooney approach to organization begins with the premise that the CTW is fundamentally a creative institution whose justification finally is what appears on the television screen. From this point of view, the organizational objective must be to fashion a creative environment in which the programming team can function freely, not subject to outside pressures from government, industry, political or social groups, or to needless interference from top management itself. *This condition is achieved through a structure which presents top management and its supporting administrative and legal staff as the buffers between the outside pressure points and the production unit. Creative control rests the executive producer and his production-writing team, while top management retains policy control.*

Programming is given tacit recognition as the primary department, as the creators of the product which the CTW was organized to produce. It thus enjoys a "first among equals" status.

At the same time, it is freed from direct responsibility for other functions required by the *project*. There are now seven departments: programming, research, information, finance and administration, community relations, international and special projects, nonbroadcast materials. The first four were part of the original plan, the others a response to experience.

At the outset, the Workshop was an autonomous unit within NET (National Educational Television), which provided it with legal and administrative services, assistance in distribution, and the corporate "umbrella" needed for grant-receiving purposes. It began its independent existence as a nonprofit corporation a year later.

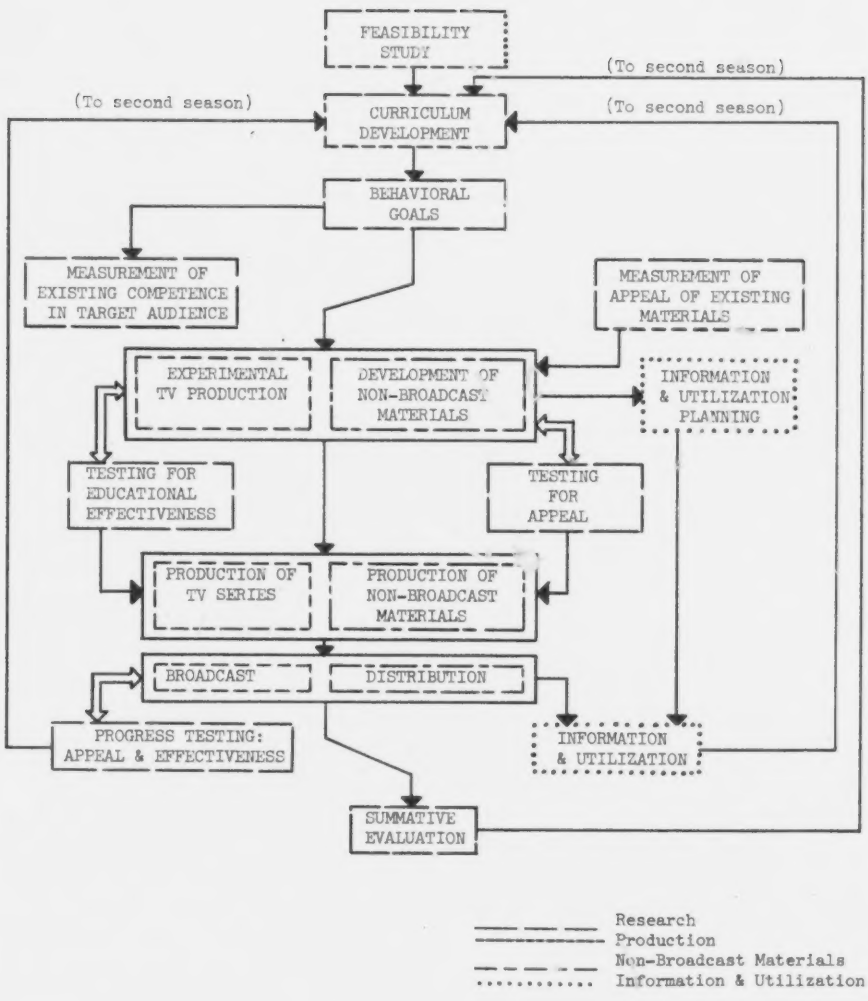
Because of the complexity and scale of the proposed venture, Joan Cooney decided early that her role should not be that of executive producer, but *project director*, with the responsibility for direction of the total enterprise. While the executive producer concentrated on the program production task, the project director would pull all the various elements together: research, professional advisors, station clearances, funding, public information, etc. The internal environment is marked by a high esprit de corps. Within the programming ranks, one meets with frequent statements that an unusual degree of creative freedom exists. There is a widespread confidence in, and respect for, top management.

To a considerable degree, this condition appears to be a reflection of the essentially rational style of those who run the organization and their sense of personal security. These personal characteristics are harnessed to a social mission which enlists their total dedication and energies.

The purpose of the CTW together with the simplicity and clarity of its television objectives act to focus operational energies clearly. This helps achieve an organizational sharpness; there is no confusion of purpose.

FUSING EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND PROGRAMMING

Joan Cooney set out to achieve a working collaboration between the programmer, the educator and the researcher—and succeeded. This collaboration was viewed as required from the beginning of operations, so that all the relevant energies could be funneled into program development at the earliest stages. This was accomplished through conscious design. Under the direction of Dr. Gerald S. Lesser, who joined even before executive producer David Connell, a series of five seminars was held to determine the program's television goals. They were attended by approximately 100 (total) educators, researchers, television professionals, writers of children's books, key workshop creative staff members, and observers from the funding organizations. The goals statement that emerged from the sessions formed the basis of the programmers' final selections of the specific "Sesame Street" goals.



The CTW Operational Model

In the use of advisors, the CTW has broken new ground. Instead of the conventional peripheral relationship with programming, the advisor enjoys an intimate involvement in the program development process. From the point of view of management, he is a member of the operating staff, although on a part-time basis, and is therefore paid for work performed.

Similarly, research has been integrated into the process, permitting programming to test its way to continuing improvement. Research is considered a fundamental part of program development. It enjoys a close relationship with programming unequalled in television, as evidenced in the program department's statement that research is what has made the success of "Sesame Street" possible.

The fusion of the three elements required careful planning and work, for it meant building new relations among departments.

FORMATIVE RESEARCH

As conceived by the CTW, research should be used as a program building tool from the earliest stages. This view is characteristic of the empirical orientation of the Workshop. It seeks to be guided pragmatically by what objective experience points to as that which will be most effective in reaching and educating its audience. This results in a process of production, testing, feedback and revised production which is, in effect, a self-regenerative process of improvement always in motion. It results, too, in an open-ended attitude toward production as a continuing process, rather than as a system with fixed limits.

Research directed toward program development is termed "formative" research. At the Workshop it consists in the main of two parts: that designed to test the ability of a program to hold the viewer's attention; that designed to see how much of the educational objective is being achieved.

To test the attention-holding power of a program segment, research head Dr. Edward Palmer uses the *distractor*, a rear-screen projection unit placed near the television set. Various slides are flashed on the screen every 7 1/2 seconds and the movement of the child's eyes is noted. The degree to which the slides are capable of distracting the viewer from the television set becomes a measure of the given program segment to hold his interest from second to second.

Educational effectiveness is measured by before-and-after tests of acquired knowledge and skills, such as the ability to recognize letters, to count, and to judge relationships. These tests, conducted by Educational Testing Service, an independent testing organization, show the program to possess a high degree of effectiveness.

SUMMATIVE RESEARCH

Summative research means going into the marketplace at large and seeking to determine both how well the program is reaching its target audience and how effective it is actually proving in carrying out its educational mission. The Yankelovich organization was commissioned by the CTW to conduct surveys in the disadvantaged areas: East Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant, New York City; Chicago, Illinois, and Washington, D.C. In the first four areas, penetration was remarkably high, reaching some 90 percent of the target households in Bedford-Stuyvesant, with 60 percent of the children regular viewers. In Washington, illustrating the UHF problem, the penetration was 32 percent.

Other studies conducted during that first season, among them a survey by the A. C. Nielsen Company, tended to support the optimistic conclusion that "Sesame Street" was a national "hit" of major proportions. The Educational Testing Service measured the effectiveness of the program as actually broadcast through achievement tests conducted among the children viewing during the season.

7 The dynamic use of research leads to a condition of permanent production, as the

feedback from testing suggests new ways to reach the goals. A certain amount of the program material is repeatable, but there are limits to how often a segment can be shown on a daily series. Permanent production is encouraged, too, by a sensitivity to the changing conditions of society and their effects on values and attitudes, all of which are reflected in the content and treatment of the program. The Workshop can thus stay abreast of change and incorporate into its programming the lessons of experience on a continuing basis. This has long-range financial and organizational implications.

PRODUCING THE PROGRAM

"Sesame Street" standards and key creative talents are drawn from commercial network television—several key staff people were, at one time or another, members of the CBS "Captain Kangaroo" team. The Cooney decision to draw her key staff from the commercial ranks stemmed from her conversations during the feasibility study period, when it became clear that the Workshop would face a huge challenge in turning out the contemplated volume of production five hours a week. Experience in volume production under commercial conditions was considered mandatory. David Connell, executive producer, had been producer of "Captain Kangaroo."

The production process begins with an assignment sheet prepared by the curriculum coordinator. It outlines the curriculum areas for the program by categories, showing the desired amount of time to be devoted to each. With this as a guide, the writer prepares his script for the live action portions and plans the use of existing film and tape segments. A nonsequential curriculum is employed, since consecutive viewing cannot be assumed in an open-circuit, noncontrolled viewing environment. Each program is complete unto itself, therefore. The script goes to the head writer for approval or rewrite, to the producer for final review, then to typing and duplication.

A week later a production meeting is held for planning the studio work, and preparations for props, set, costumes, music, etc., are under way for the following two weeks, when production begins.

The studio-shot material is delivered to the tape editor who puts it together with existing segments.

During the production process a studio producer checks for curriculum soundness. Throughout the studio day, advisors, researchers and management can monitor the production on television sets in the headquarters' offices. A completed show is fed over the lines every day at 12:30 P. M. When the observers note something that is not in accord with curriculum needs, they call the producer with the information. Thus, a continuing check is kept on the educational soundness of the production. Far from acting as a restrictive system, the monitoring has turned out to be of considerable value from the producer's standpoint.

To write the daily programs, there is a staff of six writers reporting to head writer Jeff Moss. The requirements for this assignment are rather stringent. Not only must the writer have the talent to create entertaining and interesting ways to present the educational material; he must be able to do so in a way that will attract and delight the 4-year-old child.

When confronted with educational jargon that may act to inhibit the creative flow, he can turn to the innovative Writer's Notebook, developed by research head Palmer in response to the program department's request for assistance in interpreting research findings. The Notebook presents the ideas of the researchers in a form that will be helpful to the writer. It is not a universal solution, but a helpful tool in the way a lexicon or dictionary might be helpful, since it tries to define the concepts of professional education in day-to-day terms.

Originally, production responsibility was apportioned according to functional areas, such as writing and casting, studio production, etc. With the advent of

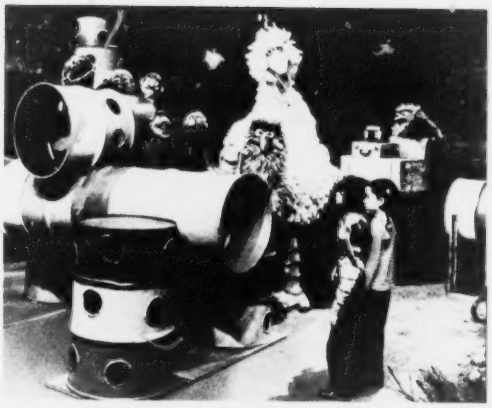
ALBUM

A Muppets, Muppets, Muppets (from left) Cookie Monster, Herbert Birdsfoot, Sherlock Hemlock, Grover, Betty Lou, Herry, Big Bird and Oscar.

B Jon Stone, a producer, Jeff Moss, head writer, and Lutrelle Horne, Production Director of foreign versions, on the set of "Sesame Street."

C Ed Palmer, CTW Vice President for Research, tests children's interest in "Sesame Street" segment by using the Distractor technique.

D CTW Field Service Coordinators from across the country meet in CTW offices with members of New York staff.



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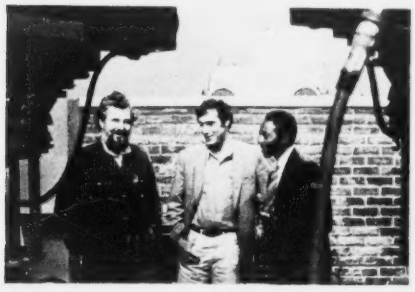

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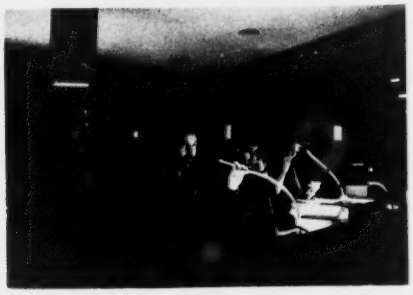

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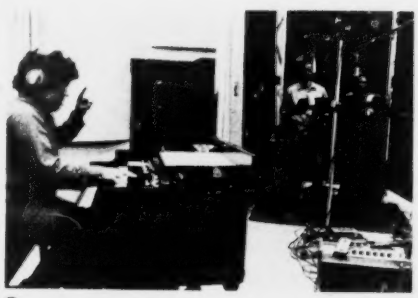
A New faces join old favorites Susan, Gordon, Mr. Hooper, Bob and Big Bird as permanent residents. Pictured here are, in foreground from left, Mr. Hooper (Will Lee), Big Bird (Carroll Spinney), Molly (Charlotte Rae), Tom (Larry Block), Antonio (Panchito Gomez), Rafael (Paul Julia) and Maria (Sonia Monzano); rear, Bob (Bob McGrath), Susan (Loretta Long) and Gordon (Matt Robinson).



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B Robert A. Hatch, Vice-President, Information.

C CTW researcher Hylda Clarke surveys research results of "The Electric Company" studies in CTW offices.

D Jon Stone (second from left) in control room with "Sesame Street" staff and studio technicians.

H

E Mrs. Evelyn Davis, Vice President for Community Relations receiving a gift of television sets for use in "Sesame Street" viewing centers.

F Big Bird.

G Joe Rapozo, musical director for CTW, rehearsing with singers.

H Previewing material for possible use on "Sesame Street" are Joan Cooney, Sam Gibbon, David Connell, and Jon Stone.

A CTW researcher observes children watching the show.

B Neighborhood Youth corps enrollee, Paula Rooks, directing "Sesame Street" follow-up activities at Andrew Jackson High School during Summer, 1971. Paula was part of the "Sesame Street Summer Day Camp" experimental project.

C Vivian Riley of the Utilization Department.

D Lloyd N. Morrisett, President, John and Mary R. Markle Foundation.

E Michael H. Dann, Vice-President, Special Projects.

F Children watching "Sesame Street" in CTW office over closed circuit television.

G Training session for Neighborhood Youth Corps workers who later worked in "Sesame Street" summer project.

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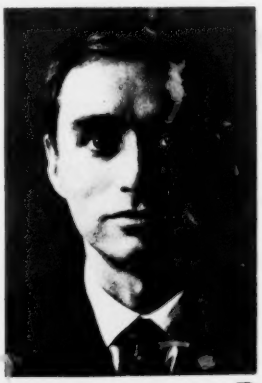
ALBUM



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H Advisors and staff members of the CTW, meeting to discuss program elements. They are (from left): Jane O'Connor, Workshop Special Assistant for curriculum and research; Executive Director Joan Ganz Cooney; Dorothy Hollingsworth, Deputy Director for planning of the Seattle (Wash.) Model City Program; Allonia Gadsden, Director of the Emerson School of New York City; and Gwendolyn Peters, Boston area Utilization Coordinator for the Workshop. Mrs. Hollingsworth and Mrs. Gadsden are members of the Workshop board of advisors. The long roll of paper they're holding charts the interest level of young children who have watched test material from "Sesame Street," a research device which aids the producers of the show in fashioning material especially for children aged 3 to 5.

I CTW field researcher in Philadelphia TV studio getting children's reactions to "Sesame Street" segments.

ALBUM

A

A NYC Field Services Coordinator, Joyce Johnson, conducting follow-up activities with pre-schoolers.

B Sherlock Hemlock (right), the "Sesame Street" sleuth, is one of the show's new Muppet characters. A bumbling detective who helps children learn problem solving by looking for clues, Hemlock is master of the obvious. Here he and Ernie, another of Jim Henson's Muppet puppets, solve the case of the missing apple.

C Gerald S. Lesser, chairman of the Board of Advisors.

D David Connell (Executive Producer), Christopher Cerf (Director of Non-Broadcast Division) and Cliff Roberts (SS cartoonist), look over "Sesame Street" cartoons in CTW office.

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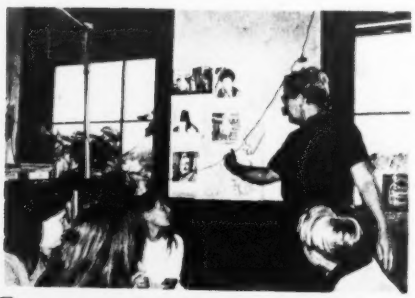
E "Sesame Street" moves beyond the TV screen with an unusual new line of educational books and playthings developed by Children's Television Workshop. Designed and researched for home use, the puppets, puzzles, books and other activity items are intended to supplement and expand on the educational goals of the TV series, teaching preschool children at the same time they entertain them.



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F In an Appalachia schoolroom.

G Oscar the Grouch with Sesame Street cast member Bob McGrath.

H "Sesame Street" materials being distributed in Appalachia.

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ALBUM

A Cookie Monster.

B Paul Elkins, Field Service Co-ordinator in Appalachia.

C Big Bird, greets three young residents.

D Ed Palmer, Jane O'Connor, Tom Kennedy, Bob Davidson, 'Ron Weaver meet in CTW office.

D

"The Electric Company" the assignments have been altered. Now there is one producer for each series: Jon Stone for "Sesame Street," Sam Gibbon for "The Electric Company." This permits one point of view to discipline each program.

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

The Children's Television Workshop is run with an efficiency equal to that of any well run commercial institution. In place of the profit motive, it relies on a conscious determination to get $1.25 of value for every $1.00 spent. Financial and administrative vice-president, Thomas Kennedy, has the responsibility of keeping the organization on a solid monetary base. This involves a clearly limited, though generous, salary policy and a system of budgetary control that all departments must adhere to.

To recruit the talented staff it sought, the Workshop management understood that it would have to find some way of competing in the television marketplace. It therefore offers the prospective key employee a salary that is generally in line with commercial level—but on the low end of the competitive scale. This means that one can enjoy a good, even a high income, but that the higher salaries on the commercial scale are ruled out. The employee must expect to receive part of his reward in the form of "psychic" income, that is, the satisfaction of working for a socially important purpose in an institution where he can enjoy a rare creative freedom. While this policy acts to keep certain highly regarded talents out of the potential prospect roster, it also helps to eliminate in advance those whose social motivation is inadequate.

The budget control procedure is based on a good working relationship between the financial and other departments. Each department head makes up his own budget for the year, assisted by a financial department representative. After one or more approval reviews by Joan Cooney and Tom Kennedy, it goes to the board in the form of the overall budget proposal, following which, the revised budgets are reported back to the department heads.

During the year there are monthly analyses made of each department's expenditures and projections are formulated of the consequences of current cost levels on the future budget. These reviews are made together with the department head, who is then in a position to change course if the projections show the department to be going over budget, or to find some way to make it possible to follow a desired course through alterations in other parts of his operation.

Similarly, an operations control representative in the studio supervises daily expenditures and calls the producer's attention to costs and commitments that might adversely affect the resources on hand.

The CTW adheres to the principle of budget flexibility. It is against a fixed, rigid budget on the grounds that television is a creative medium, a process filled with the unpredictable. Production must be free to pursue the fruits of creative imagination. This calls for an "elastic" approach to financial control which respects creative needs. It starts from the premise that financial administration is not an end unto itself, but exists to *serve* production and the other departments. Implementation of this principle calls for maximum diplomacy and sensitivity to the ways of thinking of those who are not financially oriented.

Its success in the CTW case is evidenced in the fact that at the end of the first year, the treasury showed $85,000 unspent. The 1971-72 budget contained a $250,000 budgetary reserve for "Sesame Street" and a $100,000 reserve for "The Electric Company." These reserves are something new.

Workshop production relationships are complex, involving a relatively small staff of producers, writers and film and tape editors, together with a large number of free-lance and subcontract arrangements. Its only union contract is with AFTRA,
17 the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists. Other union obligations

are satisfied through subcontract arrangements with Teletape Productions, whose studios and technical staffs are employed on the Workshop programs. The CTW itself does not own its own studios or major equipment, thus avoiding high overhead costs during "dead" periods.

The free-lance policy permits the Workshop to employ outstanding individual and company talents that it could not afford on a full-time basis. The most capable talents tend to prefer free-lancing to staff situations. Directorial chores of both series, for example, are contracted directly on a free-lance basis with two independent director groups.

Although the free-lance-subcontracting practice permits the Workshop to work somewhat below the cost level of the highly unionized commercial organizations, policy is to pay above-scale where indicated in order to obtain the services of a desired individual whose dedication and competence will more than make up for the difference in cost. In practice, important monetary savings can be achieved by so doing.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROMOTION

The Children's Television Workshop is the first educational television undertaking to mount a "big-league" promotional-publicity campaign. The advent of "Sesame Street" was greeted by press, television and radio with unparalleled generosity, testifying to both the "vacuum" in children's television and the skill with which the information department told the Workshop story to the nation.

The information function is built into the CTW as a *basic* structural element, and has functioned as such from the beginning. It enjoys a management stature equal to that of any other department.

Moreover, it is fully professional in staff and operation, headed by a vice-president with solid public relations background. Through an arrangement with a public relations firm, the Workshop has its in-house executive and team on permanent placement plus an outside task force (when needed) for specific assignments.

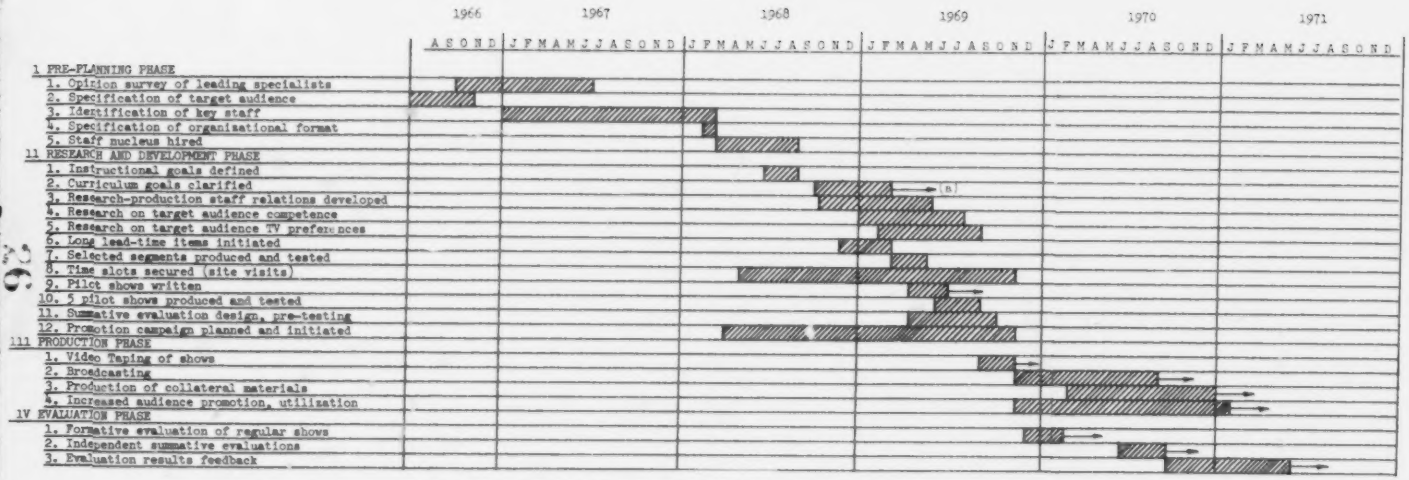
The information campaign used little paid advertising, depending largely on the public relations art. A many-sided campaign was planned and executed. The campaign involved press releases, newspaper and magazine stories and interviews, television and radio announcements, appearances before public and industry groups. An innovative electronic press conference was held by network line with 180 public TV stations, which invited local press and dignitaries. This was followed by a unique preview of the series on the NBC Television Network, sponsored by Xerox Corporation.

The ultimate special target audience was the disadvantaged child of the inner city ghetto and the remote rural area. The CTW had to overcome the limitations of the white middle-class media, the overall white, cultural elite orientation of public television, the low audience levels associated with that medium, and the prevalence of UHF in the noncommercial spectrum, all of which acted to make contact with the target populations difficult to achieve through conventional techniques.

A large-scale community involvement campaign was undertaken to inform the black, Spanish-speaking and poor rural white populations that "Sesame Street" was available to them. It was based on direct personal contact with parental groups and organizations, the setting up of viewing centers, distribution of handbills in the apartments and during parades, use of displays and mobile unit demonstrations at shopping centers and other places where people gather, etc.

The original field campaign was conducted on the basis of grants to 10 public television stations. Mixed results led to the decision to establish a field services staff. There are 13 field coordinators now functioning across the country.

18 From what was basically promotion and information to the disadvantaged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I PRE-PLANNING PHASE
1. Opinion survey of leading specialists
2. Specification of target audience
3. Identification of key staff
4. Specification of organizational format
5. Staff nucleus hired
II RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PHASE
1. Instructional goals defined
2. Curriculum goals clarified
3. Research-production staff relations developed
4. Research on target audience competence
5. Research on target audience TV preferences
6. Long lead-time items initiated
7. Selected segments produced and tested
8. Time slots secured (site visits)
9. Pilot shows written
10. 5 pilot shows produced and tested
11. Summative evaluation design, pre-testing
12. Promotion campaign planned and initiated
III PRODUCTION PHASE
1. Video Taping of shows
2. Broadcasting
3. Production of collateral materials
4. Increased audience promotion, utilization
IV EVALUATION PHASE
1. Formative evaluation of regular shows
2. Independent summative evaluations
3. Evaluation results feedback
(a)

(a) → Indicates continuing or repeated activity.

"Sesame Street" developmental and operational activities, 1966-71 (approximate durations)

communities, the field service staff has moved on to a continuing, extensive utilization campaign. This involves working with parents to help them help their children to benefit from the instructional content of the program.

In its latest development, the Workshop finds itself working with a growing number of universities and colleges who are beginning to give credit to students for time spent in the viewing centers that are growing steadily in number. The U.S. Office of Education is reported to be considering a large-scale utilization effort directed to other aspects of television education on the basis of the success of the "Sesame Street" innovation. There is now interest being shown as well in the use of radio and audio cassette to reach Indian and similar populations not being adequately served by television. These field efforts are now conducted under the purview of the recently established Community Relations Department.

GETTING THE PROGRAM ON THE AIR

It is not enough to produce a program, for it has no life or meaning until it is on the television screen and the audience has the opportunity to view. Joan Cooney understood the need to insure distribution and undertook an intensive campaign to obtain "station clearances." She and her executive assistant, Robert Davidson, visited the top 25 markets to meet with school representatives and station managers. Their purpose: to convince them that "Sesame Street" should be carried, and in the desired time, the morning. The obstacle was the instructional school service programming that fills the daily schedule of so many noncommercial stations. The effort was successful, in the main, and "Sesame Street" achieved wide distribution, with morning time in stations covering about 60 percent of the population.

Since that time the Public Broadcasting Service came into being; tying together over 200 noncommercial stations for network purposes. It feeds a limited number of program hours to the interconnected stations, the rest of the station schedules being filled by programs obtained through the syndication library of the PBS or produced locally. The entire system, national and local, has a limited capacity for programming. As production volume grows, the demands on this capacity will increase, forcing the exclusion of a considerable amount of programming. This condition can be expected to prevail until there are multiple educational outlets along patterns envisioned by proponents of cable television. For the foreseeable future, however, programs designed for mass consumption must compete for the limited over-the-air opportunities.

Those who plan educational television projects would do well to investigate distribution opportunities in advance of major commitments. They will have to make a basic determination whether to aim at national program dissemination through the PBS line or to proceed by the much slower route of syndication, the process of "bicycling" programs from station to station in cans of film or tape.

MULTIPLE FUNDING SOURCES

The proposed budget scale pointed quite early to the federal government as a major source of support, since even the original $4 million estimate was too high for either a single foundation or several in combination to meet.

The U.S. Office of Education agreed to contribute 50 percent of the first year's budget, which finally was estimated at $8 million for the first two years. (In actuality, it turned out to be $7.2 million.) A matching amount was generated through grants from the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities, the John and Mary Markle Foundation and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

CTW management is convinced that multiple sources of funding are important

U.S.O.E. Commissioner of Education, Sidney P. Marland, on the set of "The Electric Company" with Joan Cooney and other staff and cast members.

for operational flexibility and sustained support. They are therefore as much concerned with long-range prospects as with current needs and have organized themselves accordingly. To begin with, they would like to see the future government share limited to 50 percent, so that no single source could be a dominant factor. This is important, they believe, in preserving the independence of an institution such as the Workshop. It is also essential for a working environment characterized by creative freedom. That is a condition, they insist, without which the most desirable creative talent cannot be attracted.

Future financial needs were important in the decisions to undertake the creation and distribution of nonbroadcast materials: books, records, magazines, toys. This has led to the establishment of a new department, the Non-Broadcasting Materials Division, to work with commercial publishers, record distributors and toy companies, with whom profit-sharing arrangements are entered into. The products are considered extensions of the original broadcast materials. While the ultimate market potential remains to be fully determined, its promise is indicated by the Workshop's expectation of a million dollar net return from this area of activity by June of 1972—the first materials had begun to appear in the marketplace in the fall of 1971.

International program distribution represents another important source of income, estimated to be able to bring in approximately a million dollars annually in a few years. Arrangements have been concluded in Europe, Asia, Australia, the Caribbean, and Africa for television broadcast of "Sesame Street" in both English and foreign-language versions. Under CTW auspices, an original Spanish-language version is being produced in Mexico City for Latin-American distribution. A Portuguese version is being developed for Brazil. At publication time, indications are that arrangements have been completed for a German language production to be aired in the fall of 1973.

SUMMARY OF THE MODEL

The distinguishing features of the CTW model are:

- A dedication to a justifiable national need.

- A pioneering character and orientation and a "first-time" effort in a recognized social and media "vacuum."
- A highly competent, dedicated management.
- Establishment of a new organization, first as a self-contained unit of NET, then as an independent nonprofit corporation, to achieve a pioneering goal.
- Sufficient funding to do the full job of preparation, research and production, together with promotion and community involvement, on a professional level.
- Sufficient time to prepare for production.
- A recognition that to compete with commercial television it is necessary to adopt that medium's standards and techniques.
- A recruitment policy which looks upon experienced commercial television talents as the key personnel elements.
- A salary policy that offers as attractions a competitive salary on the lower end of the scale together with the psychic rewards of working in a free creative environment devoted to an important social end.
- An understanding of the complexity of the top management role, which led to the concept of the project director who "pulls it all together" and exercises policy control leaving creative control in the hands of an executive producer.
- A sensitivity to the needs and concerns of creative people, the best of whom resent outside or top management interference as opposed to direction and leadership, and a determination to so organize and operate as to shield them from those pressures.
- A "first among equals" positioning for programming which recognizes its primary role, but which enables the other departments to function equally in the management structure.
- The inclusion of promotion and research as fundamental elements of the Workshop operation from the beginning.
- The recognition that modern audience promotion is a highly specialized function calling for professional expertise, and acceptance of the staffing implications.
- Acceptance of the limitations of white middle-class media for reaching target populations of inner city, Spanish-speaking and rural poor and undertaking a direct community involvement campaign using person-to-person contact as the main element.
- Using research as an integral part of the program development process, testing segments, and then programs, for attention-holding and educational effectiveness, as well as for overall evaluation of penetration and impact.
- Bringing the professional educator advisor into an intimate working relationship with the creative and research staffs, so that, from the outset, his expert knowledge informs the process of establishing program curriculum goals.
- An empirical orientation that depends on research feedback in a self-regenerative process of continuous program improvement.
- A concept of the audience as literate where the electronic media are concerned, leading to adoption of contemporary, advanced television production techniques.
- An eclectic approach to technique which employs film, tape, live

action, animation, as indicated, as opposed to reliance on any single technique.

- A nonsequential approach to curriculum based on unpredictable open-circuit viewing patterns, which requires that each program be a self-contained entity from an educational standpoint.
- A determination to become as self-sustaining as possible through the issuance of nonbroadcast materials and international program distribution and a continuing exploration of funding opportunities, coupled with a policy of limiting individual support to nondominant positions in order to preserve operational flexibility and independence.
- A system of cost control unusual in the nonprofit world which enables the Workshop to obtain maximum value for its dollars and to maintain overall financial stability.
- An insight into the nature of television program distribution, which led to a major, and largely successful, effort to convince the stations in the noncommercial medium to carry "Sesame Street."

COMMENT—THE WORKSHOP IN PERSPECTIVE

The Children's Television Workshop is a going concern. It has proven that education and television can work together as partners, that communications technology can be harnessed for social good on a massive scale. And it has shown how.

Visualize the continental land mass of the United States, distant Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico. From the viewpoint of educational technology, it may all be considered one national electronic matrix. A new kind of schooling has been created within that matrix. Its buildings are homes; its classrooms, living rooms and viewing centers; the educational conduits, television screens. The matrix is energized by a generating force comprising creative skills, competent management and substantial resources. That force and its amazing success point to a future rich in the imaginative development of the matrix to the benefit of millions, whose lives will be immeasurably enriched.

The immense opportunities are implicit in the fact that "Sesame Street" itself has proven able to reach millions of homes, where it has been found to function with exciting effectiveness as an educational instrument. This means that untold numbers of children are coming into school better prepared than they might have been had they never been exposed to the program. They come from the inner cities, from among the poor, the black, the Spanish-speaking, from the remote hills and farms. Who can say how many human lives have already been profoundly changed by this experience, how many will perhaps now achieve adult fulfillment as a result?

The CTW has shown the way to others, generously and openly. But first things come first. Before the rush to explore the revolutionary possibilities of full development of the electronic matrix gets under way, it may be well to note that the CTW is just at the beginning of its usefulness. Whether this single institution can follow its own destiny all the way is by no means an answered question. It still must solve the problem of sustaining itself financially over the long run and is mounting imaginative efforts to find solutions.

Given the central problem of survival, which will plague all future organizations that draw their inspiration from its achievement, the primary national requirement appears evident. The starting point of any significant national effort to enlarge upon the accomplishments of the Children's Television Workshop is a determination to build that institution into a secure and permanent feature of the American educational scene. Only when that has been done will the model be complete.